1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

The Rājas were Kannaḍigas and under their rule the importance of Kannaḍa culture increased in Coorg at the expense of Malayāḷam. They were also Lingāyaṭs, who are staunch vegetarians and teetotallers, and possess a powerful and highly organized church of their own. Fifty-seven Lingāyaṭ *maṭhas* or monasteries, some of them heavily endowed, existed in north Coorg during Richter's time.[1]

The religion of the Rājas left its mark on the general population, and especially on Coorgs. The latter constituted the aristocracy under the Rājas, and a number of them held important posts at the Rājas' courts. Members of the royal family occasionally married Coorgs. The close contact which Coorgs enjoyed with the Rājas certainly helped in the spread of the culture and religion of the latter.

Many Coorgs even today adorn their foreheads with three horizontal, finger-wide, stripes of *vibhūti* or sacred ashes, a mark used by devotees of Shiva in all parts of India. Coorg folksongs frequently refer to a man or woman praying to Shiva soon after getting up in the morning. Most of the important temples visited by Coorgs are Shaivite in character.

VII

The annexation of Coorg by the British in 1834 marks the beginning of the operation of vast political, economic, social, and ideological forces on the people of that tiny province. For instance, the British gave *jagirs* or assessment-free lands to those Coorgs who had helped them in the suppression of the Canara Rebellion of 1837, and later these were allowed to be treated as gifts to the individuals concerned and not to their joint families. Traditionally, the joint family was the unit which owned land, and individuals owned only a little cash and a few movables. But by 1870, less than forty years after the annexation of Coorg by the British, some individual Coorgs had acquired for themselves farms and coffee plantations. Richter applauds the change:

> . . . these individual enterprises seem to be the natural transition to an impending general social reform—the breaking up of the great houses, and the independent establishment of each married couple residing near their own paddy-fields, and eating the fruit of their own labour. The

[1] Op. cit., pp. 175-6.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

with a village-deity (we are not thinking of deities of the Poleyas here) is comparatively rare.

At the Kundat Bhadrakāḷi shrine a Brahmin normally acts as priest, and offerings of fruit and flowers are the rule except on one day in the year when animals are sacrificed outside the Bhadrakāḷi shrine, when the Brahmin priest has left, locking the door of the shrine after him. The Brahmin re-enters the temple next morning only after the front of the shrine has been thoroughly cleaned. He subsequently performs two purificatory rites in order to restore the temple to its normal ritual status.

The Brahmin priest is more co-operative at the festival of the Bhagavati temple at Armēri. In addition to performing certain ritual at the festival, he acts as oracle, a role usually reserved in Coorg for a member of a non-Brahmin caste.

The Rāmēshwara temple at Irpu and the Tala Kāvēri shrine are instances of almost complete Sanskritization. They are among the strongholds of Sanskritic Hinduism in Coorg and act as centres for its spread.

It is not always the Brahmin priest who is the agent of Sanskritic Hinduism. In every part of the Kannaḍa country, and in Coorg, the Lingāyaṭ sect, consisting exclusively of non-Brahmins, have exercised in the past a Sanskritizing influence. Lingāyaṭ ritual is Sanskritic (though not Vēdic), and the Lingāyaṭ Rājas of Coorg have been responsible for the Sanskritization of the customs, manners, and rites of Coorgs. Customs like marking the forehead every morning with three stripes of sacred ashes (*vibhūti*), celebrating the festival of Shivarātri, and erecting tombstones, surmounted by the figure of the Nandi Bull, over the graves of important persons reveal Lingāyaṭ influence. Lingāyaṭism had its origin in the Kannaḍa country, and it was—and is—a predominantly Kannaḍa sect, and the Lingāyaṭs transmitted to Coorgs some purely Kannaḍa customs like Ugādi (lunar New Year).

As mentioned earlier, Lingāyaṭism made headway amongst Coorgs more easily because it was the religion of the rulers. Coorgs holding important posts in the service of the Rājas took over some of the customs and rites of their masters, and this had a chain reaction, which is natural in a highly stratified society.

The Brahmin too has been influenced by non-Sanskritic modes of worship, and impressed with the power of the village-deities. In south India it is common to find Brahmins making votive

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

778 659 private contributions. The lion's share of this large Government grant falls to the Mercara-Omkarésvara temple with Rupees 4,850, to the Bhágiamandala-dévastána with Rupees 3,956; to the Tale-Kávéri pagoda with Rupees 2,320 and to the Rajahs' tombs with Rupees 2,000 per annum—a total of Rupees 13,126! When the people once see the folly of their superstitious idolatry, what an amount of spiritual good for themselves and their children they may effect with these large sums, should Government continue its liberality!

778 795 The *Mottas* or *Jangams* are religious institutions, originated and endowed by the Coorg Rajahs, who were themselves Lingaites. They are now evidently of greater importance to the Siváchára-priests, who derive an easy living from the rich endowments, than of any practical use for the Coorg people, amongst whom this sect, in spite of its royal patronage, never struck any root. The Siváchárics are easily recognised by the silver capsule, enclosing the Linga, which they wear suspended round their necks. The 57 Mattas hold as endowments 31,457 batties of land, representing an annual revenue of 3,360 Rupees due to Government, if the land were held [659] by ryots. Government, therefore, contributes not only that amount of revenue, but also the actual produce of the fields less the working expenditure.

The most richly endowed Mattas are the following:—

Bassava-hally	Matta	in Yedavanád	with 4,105	batties of land,
Abbi	do.	do.	4,005	do.
Madapur	do.	Gadinád	do. 2,643½	do.
Siddapur	do.	Horurnurocklenád	2,372½	do.
Thanady	do.	Amatnád	with 1,485	do.
Chadadarally	do.	Horurnurocklenád	1,430	do.
Cheppada Katte	do.	Yedenálknád	with 1,188½	do.
Thorenur	do.	Gadinád	do. 1,100	do.
their endowments amounting to			18,330	batties of land.

4: Richter M; G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

Musjids.—There are but 5 small Musjids in Coorg, erected by the Mussulmans residing here, whose number does not much exceed one thousand. They are mostly poor people and live chiefly in Mercara, Virájpet and Fraserpet.

g. The Amma-Codagas.

In connection with the preceding subjects, it is natural, to enquire into the condition of the indigenous priesthood. It is clear, that the present intermixture of Hinduism with the more simple religious practices of the Coorgs points back to a time, when the encroaching Brahmins had to encounter popular superstition, upheld by an indigenous priesthood, whose direct descendants the present "Amma-Codagas" seem to be. In language, manners and costume they are hardly to be distinguished from other Coorgs, but are less favoured in appearance; many of them wear the brahminical cord, and all abstain from animal food and fermented liquor. They intermarry with their own people only, a custom which may perhaps hasten their gradual diminution and total extinction, as they constitute but a small portion of the whole population. There are altogether 42 Amma-Codaga houses with 281 inhabitants of whom 97 are men, 90 women and 94 children. They live chiefly in Kiggatnád and Padinálknád, 21 families in the former and 16 in the latter talnq. Like the other Coorgs they are agriculturists and only 3 are in Government service. Their name "Amma-Codaga" or Mother-Coorgs i. e. Coorgs belonging to Mother Kávéri denotes them as men devoted to Kávéri or as priests. With the rest of the Coorg tribe they celebrate in the same manner the great Kávéri and Huttari festivals, but of course as priests performing púja in their own houses, for they have nothing to do with the Kávéri temple. They have no sacred books or shastras, nor do they exercise any spiritual influence over the people. The history of the old Coorg-priests is shrouded in obscurity. They seem

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

the village or nád offers Prasáda and whilst throwing a flower-garland over the bridegroom's neck, he mutters a blessing, for which pious act he afterwards receives a gift in money. In case of illness Brahmins are sent for, to implore the deity for recovery. In a place set apart in the compound they perform their ceremonies and, if the patient gets well, they are amply rewarded. At a housewarming (griha-pravésha) it has become the fashion among the Coorgs to invite Brahmins and to give them a good meal and presents. The expenses incurred amount from a small sum to upwards of a thousand Rupees. The Puróhita or officiating Brahmin kindles a fire of jackwood (hebalasu) in the middle room, throws ghee and rice into the flame and repeats some mantras as required for the occasion. Thus we see, that Brahminism invades every accessible opening in Coorg life, and pandering to the ignorance and pride of the Coorgs, it is more successful than the great truths of Christianity. It is, however, to be hoped, that education along with other civilizing influences will do its work, to dissipate the darkness of ignorance and superstition and help to free the Coorgs from the trammels of priestly imposition.

To acknowledge the indigenous Coorg priesthood and yet account for its degraded state as compared with the erudition of the twice-born, the Brahmins invented the following legend, which is not in harmony with the Kávéri-Purána:—The sage Kávéra as a reward for his austerities was blessed with a daughter Kávéri, whom he promised in marriage to Agastia another sage, who also resided on the Brahmagiris. Kávéri did not accept the proposal and assuming the shape of a river fled from the mountain. Agastia in hot persuit overtook her in Katiednád and persuaded her to submit their dispute to the arbitration of their friends. They called three families of Amma-Kodagas and six of Coorgs; the former took the part of Agastia, the latter that of Kávéri. The Amma-Codagas

12*

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

decided, that Kávéri should not be allowed to proceed; but the Coorgs declared, that a woman should not be forced to marry against her will. The enraged Agastia Muni pronounced a curse upon the Coorgs, that the generation of Coorgs should decrease, that their women should not tie their garments in front, that the sown rice should not grow and that their cows should not give milk. Kávéri Amma who was the patroness of the Coorgs counteracted the curse as well as she could in the following words: "the Coorg shall increase, but the Amma-Codagas decrease; the Coorg women shall tie their garments behind; the sown paddy shall be transplanted and the cows be milked after the calves have drunk." So saying she tried to escape, and on being held by Agastia by the border of her garment, she turned to the right and flowed rapidly away. Hence the place, where this occurred, was called Balamúri (turning to the right). A linga has been erected near the spot by the Brahmins and it is yearly visited in Tulámása at the time of the Kávéri feast by Coorgs and others, who bathe in the river. Dodda-Virájender built here also a rest-house, which, though over 60 years old, is still in tolerable preservation.

The only object this legend can have is, not to clear up the origin of the indigenous priesthood of Coorg, but to obscure and bury it under the rubbish of Puranic lore which eludes every historical investigation.

7. ARCHITECTURAL STRUCTURES AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL REMAINS IN COORG.

a. Palaces.

Besides the *Mercara-Palace*, there are two other Aramanes, one at *Nálknád* and the other in *Halerinád*, but neither is remarkable for extent or elegance. The palace at Nálknád

[Errata: This should read "The Coorgs shall." See Corrigenda, Cat. 116, p. 403 -- Analyst]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

211 figures are in grotesque attitudes, but remarkably well grouped
532 and closely resemble the sculptured reliefs of Halibeed.
172 In the top compartment there is occasionally a lamp and a Linga both on pedestals, and these insignia, together with the Basavas in the third frame, evidently denote the heroes as Linga worshippers and aliens from the present Coorgs, who know nothing about them; the Canarese Gaudas, in whose countries they are chiefly found, claim them as relics of their ancestors and annually present before these stones offerings of cakes and fruit. The dresses of all the figures represented are not in the Coorg but in the costume of Hindus of the scantiest clothing. Col. Wilks in his *History of Mysore* Vol. I. p. 15. explains the sculptured representations in the
[795] three compartments thus: "The lowest describes the battle in which the hero was slain; the centre compartment represents him in the act of being conveyed to heaven between two celestial nymphs: in the uppermost he has arrived at the regions of bliss and is delineated as seated before the peculiar emblem of his religion—generally the lingum—for the practice of erecting monuments seems chiefly to belong to the sect of Siva."

211 In north and north-east Coorg similar stones, but with
178 simple and coarse sculptural figures are still erected by re-
766 lations of influential men who met with a violent death or were carried away by small-pox and cholera.

211 With the Coorgs it is the custom, to keep images of men
769 and women in Coorg costume chased in silver-plates in the *Keimatta*, which is a small square building near the house, in remembrance of their ancestors whose departed spirits are
[326] there annually worshipped. These plates which are of little artistic merit are made by the country goldsmiths. Near the
[775] *Kannana house*, on that fine hill slope opposite the Central
[648] School in Mercara, there is a stone-slab with a picture in relief of a Coorg warrior. The stone is erected in the paddy

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

when feeling sure of his position, he imposed upon
his followers instead of the voluntary Dhúli-batta (dusty-grain) 175
a regular tax of one and a half butty of rice and nine annas 643
eight pies in cash per house per annum. His next step was 648
to call upon the people, in alternate parties to guard his dwelling on the Háleri farm. These watchmen were called *Chaudigara*, a name ever afterwards retained for the Coorg Rájahs' troops. Having openly declared himself and being acknowledged by his adherents ruler of Háleri and of the surrounding Náds, the Padinalknád Karanemkán Náyaka also submitted and so did the others under the condition, that they should receive three-fourths of the revenue and pay one-fourth to the Háleri chief. His increasing power soon threatened the safety of the Coorg Náyakas, who at last were put 643
to death and the whole country brought under the Háleri 648
government. 174
177

That the Coorg Rájahs were aliens to the country is evident from the fact, that they were Lingaites, whilst the Coorgs [795] [791]
maintained their own crude form of demon- and ancestor-worship and rarely joined the Shivácháries. These are most numerous in north-east Coorg where the people are closely allied with the Mysoreans, and where the influence of the Rájahs was naturally greatest. Again in Padinalknád the Malayálam element seems to be predominant, whilst in Táwunád, Benganád and Surlabimuttanád the Tulu Gaudas and Bants make their influence felt. If a further proof were [144]
required to show that the Coorgs are a mixed race, I need only mention, that besides the striking difference in features and colour of the Coorgs, varying between the Caucasian and Mongolian physiognomy and between a fair and dark skin, the house-names also of many Coorg families clearly point to Mysore, Tamil, Malayálam or Tulu origin. Even within the memory of the present generation strangers were received by and incorporated with the Coorgs. There is now a dispute pending about six families in Kiggatnád, who ten years [578]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

632 [485] of the former fort. It was a happy thought to select this spot for a travellers' bangalow, where after a weary journey over the monotonous Mysore-roads the traveller is placed in the midst of a charming scenery, a worthy introduction into Coorg!

[132] From the position of Fraserpet its climate is hotter than that of Mercara, but during the monsoon it is extremely pleasant, as very little rain falls there and the heat of the sun is moderated by constant clouds and light fogs. The nights are cool and pleasant, nor is the sun ever very oppressive at any season, except for an hour or two at midday; after the monsoon, however, and especially after considerable inundations by the Kávéri, the place becomes feverish and is not inhabited by Europeans.

The town was named "Fraserpet" in honor of General [162] [361] Fraser, the first Commissioner of Coorg. It contains now 326 houses, mostly tiled, and a population of 1,213 souls, of whom 360 are Christians, 388 Mussulmans and 465 Hindus. [368] The town can boast of a Roman Catholic Church, a newly built shrine, dedicated to Ganapati, with a very useful public well in front of it, an Anglo-Vernacular School, a native rest-house with a tank and a Government wood-yard, besides the [795] European bangalows. The Roman Catholics are mostly native or East Indian pensioned soldiers and their families, a detachment of Sappers and Miners having been stationed there when employed in making the great road to Mercara and the bridge over the Kávéri.

[131] *Sómawárpet* in Yedavanád is 26¼ miles to the north of [362] Mercara and of the same elevation. It lies on the highroad [162] to Manjerabad, but there is nothing remarkable connected [241] with the Petta. Of its 197 houses 19 are tiled and 178 [437] thatched. Of the 953 inhabitants 862 are Hindus and 91 Mussulmans. There are but few cultivators, most of them live on trade in various articles. Though fully alive to their

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

872 Of *private institutions*, aided by Government, there are
797 the German Mission School at Anandapur and the Roman Catholic Boys' and Girls' schools at Vírájpet. Regarding *private unaided schools*, it is difficult to obtain reliable information as to their number and attendance. They are generally of a temporary and very insignificant character.

871 Of the 1,545 pupils at School in March 1870, 1,422 were
162 in Government Schools and 1,082 children Coorgs. Assuming that the present population of Coorg is 120,000, of whom about 25,000 are Coorgs, the number of children under education in the Government and aided schools, gives a proportion of one child at school for every 78 people of the whole population or nearly 13 per thousand; and as 1,082 Coorg boys and girls attend these schools, of one Coorg child for every 23 people of that race or 43 per thousand, the proportion in the case of the latter being unusually large and satisfactory.

C. CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE UPON THE COORGS.

1. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC SETTLEMENTS.

563 Whatever the moral and political vices of the Coorg
795 Rájahs may have been, in religious matters they showed a
643 tolerant and liberal spirit, which at the time put to shame
175 the intolerance of many Christian Governments. Dodda-
[798] Vírájender extended his protection to the poor fugitive Roman Catholics who fled from the claws of Tippu Sultan, when in 1792 Lord Cornwallis besieged Seringapatam. They were Konkanis from the western coast, had incurred Tippu's particular displeasure for their assistance in provisioning General Mathew's army and had come into his power after the fall of Bednore and the siége of Mangalore in 1783, when he settled

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

563
795
643
175

them in and about his capital. The Konkanis are noted for their industry and skill of adapting themselves to circumstances. Dodda-Vírájender eagerly welcomed them into his depopulated country, granted them land at Vírájpet, procured for them a Priest in the person of Father John de Costa, a native of Goa, assisted in building a chapel and allotted to its maintenance a stipend of 84 butties of paddy and a certain amount of oil and candles, which allowance his successors continued and which the English Government since 1835 commuted into a monthly grant of Rs. 20, "its continuance being dependant not only on the Priest's conduct, but that of his flock, in as far as he may justly be considered responsible for it." This stipend is now looked upon as the Priest's salary from Government and attempts have been made, to get it increased, but Sir Mark Cubbon declared: "that the amount, the Priest enjoyed, had no doubt been deemed proportioned to the ordinary duties of his office, but if called to the discharge of any extra duties by the requisition of the members of his congregation, the Commissioner conceived that the latter should contribute the means of enabling the Priest to meet such extra-official calls."

563
795

Pastoral jurisdiction having been claimed by the Archbishop of Goa, the Rev. F. Bernardino De Sta. Agnes, Bishop-Coadjutor, Vicar Apostolic at Mangalore addressed in 1846 the Superintendent of Coorg in the following letter:—

The Mission of Coorg, by a Firman passed by the Rájah in 1805, was founded to remain always under the jurisdiction of the Bishop, Vicar Apostolic of Bombay, who has ultimately transferred it to me. No jurisdiction over it was ever or is now possessed by the Archbishop of Goa. The jurisdiction of His Grace does not extend beyond that Portuguese territory as shewn by various Bulls which have emanated from Rome regarding the same, but the Archbishop, actuated by certain national presumption, pretends to possess something like an omnipotence in the spiritual throughout the whole of India and therefore sends his emissaries to excite dissensions and disturbances among the Roman Catholics, subject to the Vicars Apostolic, and he has

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

accordingly sent one to Coorg named Francesco Pacheco, who endeavours to take forcible possession of the Church there."

Now the Roman Catholic establishments in Coorg are under the spiritual charge of the Bishop at Bangalore, the See at Mangalore having declined about ten years ago to send Priests to so unhealthy a locality as Vírájpet.

In 1835 a grant of Rs. 1500 was sanctioned by Government for the restoration of the delapidated church at Vírájpet and in 1866 a new grant of Rs. 2,500 for rebuilding the same edifice, which after completion is said to have cost Rs. 15,000 (vide p. 375). The Priest's dwelling and the schoolhouses for boys and girls are on the same premises. The streets of the Christian quarter look clean and tidy and the houses like those of the better class of other natives in the place are substantial and comfortable. The number of Roman Catholic Christians in Vírájpet amounts to 313, and there may be as many more in the neighbourhood. The mortality amongst those in the town has of late years been very considerable.

As stated by Mr. Kerr, the late Superintendent of Coorg and himself a Roman Catholic, "the Christian colony at Vírájpet is not a mission-establishment in the ordinary acceptation of the term," and no Coorg and hardly any other caste people of Coorg have ever joined it. The Christians, away from their pastor's eye, seem to be more influenced by the surrounding heathenish superstition, than to exercise any renovating influence by their Christian life and testimony upon the heathen; but socially as well as morally they appear now to be in a better condition than they were, when Lieut. Connor saw them in 1817 and drew a picture of the colony in the following sketch:—

"The Christians here are under the Church of Bombay, a small chapel has been built and its services are performed by an ecclesiastic from that place; the condition of his flock, however, is far from flourishing, the greater portion of them are employed in the manufacture of arrack from rice, an

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

563
795

avocation that bespeaks the estimation in which they are held. Christianity has impressed no very awful sense of religion on its rude followers, who are subject to all the degradation, attaching to a profession of it in eastern countries; but a small share of the morality it inculcates is observable, and its votaries seem still to retain most of their ancient superstitions; indeed, if either the condition or character of these followers of it be taken as a criterion, the most sanguine could scarcely hope much good to result from a more general conversion to its divine doctrines."

A church and native congregation, chiefly of Tamil-Christians, the servants of Europeans, and pensioned sepoys, especially Sappers and Miners, have been established at Mercara and Fraserpet at which places periodically a European or Native Priest resides.

2. THE ENGLISH CHAPLANCY IN MERCARA.

797

Mercara containing a greater number of Europeans than Mangalore and offering a more salubrious residence, the chaplain of the latter station removed to the former in 1854[1] and Mercara was ever since under the spiritual care of a clergyman of the Church of England. His congregation, comprising civilians, military officers and planters, numbers over hundred souls. Through subordinate agency native Christians, especially Tamulians, have likewise been benefitted by the successive Chaplains and the heathens around have at least an opportunity of witnessing in a chaste church (vide p. 192.) the pure and simple worship of a Protestant congregation; and should all who profess and call themselves Christians be led in the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace and in righteousness of life, what amount[2] of good might thus be effected even by those who cannot speak to the natives in their tongue! There would certainly be less cause for taunting the Christian missionary with want of success!

[1] The first resident Chaplain at Mercara, the Rev. Mr. Prosnett, [Errata: This should read "in 1852". See Corrigenda, Cat. 116, p. 474 — Analyst]

[2] [Errata: This should read "what an amount". See Corrigenda, Cat. 116, p 494 -- Analyst]